

Serial No. 10/780,743

KAS-199

Amendment

Responsive to Final Office Action dated January 8, 2008

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MAY 08 2008**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A sample dispensing apparatus comprising:

a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head
having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample;

rails, said sample probes being mounted to said rails;

sample probes that move along said rails from a sample ~~suction~~sucking
position to a sample discharge position; and

a controller for controlling said sample probes to reciprocally move between
said sample suction position and said sample discharge position alternately so as to prevent
said sample probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container being
discharged into a reaction cuvette by using said plurality of sample probes,

wherein said rails make a closed loop including said sample sucking position
and said sample discharge position.

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10. (Previously Presented) A sample dispensing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said closed loop has substantially an elliptic shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample probe.

11. – 12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A sample dispensing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said controller stops use of any of said sample probes and controls carrying out sampling by another one of said sampling probes.

14. (Previously Presented) An automatic analyzer including a sample dispensing apparatus according to claim 9.

15. (Currently Amended) A sample dispensing method for an analyzing apparatus comprising the steps of:

dispensing samples from a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample;

mounting said sample probes to rails and moving said sample probes along said rails from a position for sucking a sample to a sample discharge position; and

controlling said sample probes to move reciprocally between said sample suction position and said sample discharge position alternately so as to prevent said sample

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probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container being discharged into a reaction cuvette by using said plurality of sample probes.

wherein said movement of said sample probes makes a closed loop including said sample sucking position and said sample discharge position.

16. (Currently Amended) A sample dispensing method ~~apparatus~~ according to claim 15, ~~wherein said movement including moving said sample probes in said closed loop along a path that~~ is substantially of an elliptic shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample nozzle.

17. - 18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A sample dispensing ~~apparatus~~ method according to claim 15, ~~further including wherein~~ said controlling includes a stopping operation with one said nozzle and carrying out sampling by another said nozzle.